

The Intersection of Class, Caste, and Colonial Exploitation in Mulk Raj Anand's Untouchable

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Abstract: *The pain and suffering of Dalits or the oppressed in the Indian caste system are reflected in Mulk Raj Anand's debut book, Untouchable. The author raises the problem of human suffering and exploitation, which leads to inhumane manifestations. Indians acknowledge that the caste system has led to millions of people suffering as a consequence of exploitation of outcasts or untouchables. Maltreatment of members of lower castes is referred to as exploitation. Bakha is forced to do menial labor for the Hindu caste, but he receives no compensation other than leftover bread. The only way the untouchables can engage with others is inside themselves. This is accomplished by preventing them from touching or using any public spaces, including roads, wells, schools, temples, and so on. Hindus of the caste believe that the untouchables are evil viruses or cursed people, and that their contact would contaminate whatever that belongs to them. In conclusion, exploitation and human misery are shown eloquently by Mulk Raj Anand in his book Untouchable. The untouchables or outcasts experience extreme exploitation, misery, and despair as a result of the dehumanizing treatment or exploitation brought about by the caste system.*

Keywords: Colonial hierarchy, gender marginalization, psychological trauma, institutionalized injustice

I. INTRODUCTION

Untouchable tells the tale of a young guy from an Indian societal pariah family. He is a young guy who first exalts the life and status of the sahib. Despite his unpleasant profession as a sweeper, he is a lovely, realistic person who can be majestic at times and weak at others. One day in the young man's life is the main focus of the narrative. He goes through one of the most embarrassing days of his early life. He must contend with prejudice, bigotry, and hypocrisy from the moment he wakes up. His violent father's yells wake him up in the morning. He was publicly spanked throughout the day for unintentionally touching a Hindu from a higher caste on the street. A priest abused his sister, and when he cleaned her gutters, a lady threw food at him. After being humiliated and held responsible for a little boy's injuries, his father eventually threw him out of the home. He ended the day by following a large group of people to hear Gandhi's address against untouchability. Gandhi urged the untouchables to reject the leftovers from the upper castes and to cease to put up with these abuses. Eliminating their vices, improving their hygiene, and purifying their lives are the steps to escaping untouchability. But while he looks for what he was meant to do, he was perplexed and has never fully discovered the solution. The narrative concludes with the expectation that he will eventually track down the poet who first described the "flush system." He thinks of Gandhi's remarks and the poet's machine again as he returns to his father and his miserable bed. The major characters are Colone L. Hutchinson, Mahatma Gandhi, and Hnklw. I Luvildar Charnt Singh. the author. Nath Iqbal. Pundit Kali Nath and Sohini. Lakha is a minor character. Rakho. Gulnbo. Chota, the Babus family, and Ram Charan. The novel takes place in an unidentified town during the British colonial era in an Indian pariah colony. Mahatma Gandhi's campaign against the British Empire and against prejudice and intolerance towards outcasts was only getting started at the time.

EXPLOITATION IN ECONOMIC LIFE

Mulk Raj Anand uses Bakha's family in the book to illustrate how economic exploitation is the main source of hunger and poverty in India. The peasants' poverty and hunger are caused by the exploiters, who are portrayed as Hindus from higher castes. The exploited individuals are unable to support themselves. For their fundamental necessities, they are at the whim of the exploiters. Furthermore, the outcasts labor for the upper classes without receiving any compensation. "Why aren't the latrines clean, you renegade Bak.he! Not a single one is suitable to approach! I've explored everywhere! Are you aware that you are in charge of my piles? The infection was sitting on one of those dirty latrines when I got it. "All right, Halvidar j i, I'll prepare one for you right away," Untouchable, 7 says. Bak.ha spoke carefully as he picked up his brush and basket from where they were displayed on the house's front wall. After cleaning every toilet, Bak.ha had a back spasm. The fact that he gets rewarded with leftover bread rather than cash, however, is what drives him. It indicates that the caste system is being used to abuse the outcasts. The outcasts Bak.ha represents are forced to do daily manual labor, which has become essential to them. In addition to receiving an inadequate salary for his work, he also often faces mistreatment from caste-Hindus. Bak.ha, who slavishly serves them, is reminded of his duties to keep the latrines clean, but they are completely unconcerned with his well-being. He worked diligently, swiftly, and without sacrificing effort.

There were outcasts from Hindu society, including scavengers, leatherworkers, barbers, washermen, and water carriers. Once having crystal-clear water, the brook in the road was now tainted by the muck and grime from the public restrooms around it. The smell of dead corpses' hides and skins that were let to dry on its banks, as well as the dung that had been piled up to make fuel cakes from donkeys, sheep, horses, cows, and buffaloes

The exploitative and cruel behaviors of the Hindu social order are reflected in Anand. Bakha lives in a dark, filthy, one-room mud hut that resembles a cave. He rests under a soiled, old blanket on a fading blue carpet. Beneath a torn blanket, his father and brother slept on a bed made of broken string. Sohini, Bakha's sister, is even prohibited from wearing a bodice underneath her Muslin shirt. Bakha's inability to purchase any sweets, "Dare I buy some sweets?," exposes his destitution. After considering all of the candy options, he concludes that sweepers should only purchase coarse items like jalebis and not any other sweets. The castes don't value the intellect, ability, agility, or hard labor of the untouchables. Since the higher castes believe they are cursed and have a distinct foul odor, they will not get fair compensation, not even in the form of food. Since they just do menial tasks like cleaning the sewers and latrines and sweeping the streets and lanes, they don't deserve to be compensated. The fact that they are unable to assert their own rights is the worse. They are exploited by the castes or Hindus, who make them labor hard for them yet refuse to pay them. Despite their intelligence and diligence, the untouchables or dalits will not be engaged in appropriate jobs since there is no employment for them. "What a dexterous workman." "Not the kind of man who ought to be doing this," they would constantly say, "a little better than his job." Because he seemed bright, compassionate, and somewhat dignified. Perhaps his foreign attire, however loose and ill-fitting, or his concentration on his work were what elevated him above his foul-smelling surroundings. The untouchables are really taken advantage of by Hindus. They need to realize that individuals who practice Hinduism are to blame, not the religion itself. But in the name of caste, the Hindus have oppressed, mistreated, and exploited them.

EXPLOITATION IN SOCIAL LIFE

By forbidding them from utilizing public amenities like roads, wells, temples, and schools, the author illustrates how outcasts or Dalits feel taken advantage of in social relationships. First of all, Anand uses Bakha's family to symbolize social connection exploitation. Their living situation makes it abundantly evident how Bakha and his family suffer as a result of exploitation. To prevent interaction with members of the higher castes, their homes are located in an inhospitable location. Since the untouchables and outcasts are seen to be cursed and unclean, any contact with the higher castes, even if unintentional, is considered a slight to the upper castes. The exploitation of the castes and the untouchables, sometimes known as the outcasts, is also evident in the way they are completely dependent on the higher castes (castes-Hmdus). Even the lower castes must rely on the compassion of the higher castes in order to get water, which is a fundamental human requirement for survival. According to the story, the outcasts were permitted to build the platform around the well because the Hindus of the three higher castes would see the water as contaminated if they

ever drew from it. Additionally, they were not permitted to utilize the nearby brook as doing so might taint the stream. Because fate would decree that he had time to fill their pitchers with water, the outcasts must wait for change to bring a caste Hindu to the well and for good fortune to determine that he was benevolent. (45). It is evident that the outcasts are seen as less than human and do not have the same privileges as the castes. They are even thought to be a kind of bacterium that will contaminate the well if they use or are close to it. Since the Hindu caste is considered a kind of God, they must beg for water. "Oh Maharaj! Maharaj! Would you kindly draw us some water? We implore you. The chorus of voices rushed towards him, some getting up, stooping and uniting their hands in supplication, while others twisted their lips in different attitudes of servile plea and complete humility while they remained silent. "We have been waiting here for a long time, and we will be grateful," they yelled. The sepoy was either overly hurried or a heartless thug. However, he ignored the people gathered at the well's base and continued on his way. The only thing the outcasts can do is wait like animals for their lord to bring them food. They await the filling of their pitchers by a Hindu caste member. But not every Hindu caste is prepared to realize their dreams. This fact demonstrates both their social exclusion and caste's dominance over them. They do feel that they are being taken advantage of in their day-to-day lives. Anand then uses character Bakha and his experiences from a single day of his life to illustrate the most blatant instances of exploitation in social relationships. Bakha is subjected to a significant deal of humiliation, both verbally and physically, as well as being taken advantage of. When his violent father wakes him up in the morning, he begins his menial work. He feels compelled to sweep the roads and clean the restrooms. His position as he must abandon his aspirations for an education after realizing his situation: There was no indication that the masters would teach Mulk Manifestation of Exploitation because the parents of the other children would let their boys to be tainted by the contact of the low-caste guy. The work of Raj Anand They are not allowed to touch the outcasts' books for fear that their finger, which led the student through the text, may contaminate the leaves.

Because the school and parents of caste students are worried that the untouchable students would touch them, the untouchables are not allowed to attend classes. They fear that the untouchables will contaminate the school and its infrastructure. As human beings, the outcasts were denied access to regular social life. They are compelled to endure their ignorance, poverty, and enslavement in an indirect manner. Bakha is regarded as the untouchables' representative and is not deserving of being touched. In addition, people get harsher treatment than animals. Bakha gets humiliated greatly as he tries to purchase smokes and is asked where he can place a penny to pay. He is even unable to pay the store immediately with the money. It has been noted that: The store owner indicated a location on the board close to him. Bakha placed his anna on that spot. From the jug he used to sprinkle the betel leaves sometimes, the betel-leaf vendor hurried some water over it. He picked up the nickel piece and tossed it into the counter after purifying it. Then, like a butcher tossing a bone to a persistent hound sniffing around the corner of his store, he threw a package of "Red-Lamp" smokes at Bakha.

Therefore, it is evident that the untouchables feel taken advantage of when they attempt to speak with the castes directly. Anand even uses an analogy to sarcastically compare Bakha to a dog in order to explain this situation. It is clear that the outcasts' contact was shut off by the higher caste. Since the castes see untouchables as cursed, they must notify them of their presence so that they may avoid touching anybody who could contaminate their skin. As Bakha strolls around the town's streets, he feels taken advantage of and degraded. By the way, Bakha was bumped by a caste guy who was in a big hurry. It indicates that he has been soiled by the contact. Rather of offering an apology, the arrogant caste-Hindu completely degraded Bakha, treating him like a filthy dog. 'Keep to the side of the road, you lowcaste!' is a quotation. Why don't you announce your approach via phone, you swine! You cock-eyed offspring of a bow-legged scorpion, are you aware that you have touched and defiled me? I will now need to go and cleanse myself. The caste-Hindu really mistreats Bakha with all of his cruel remarks, "Dirty dog!, Son of a bitch!, The offspring of a pig!" only because Bakha accidentally touched someone on the way. He was seen as a useless thing by the caste. The fact that he is prohibited from walking on public streets is what he finds most upsetting. Furthermore, the audience supports this humiliation as a kind of class dehumanization directed against members of a different class who are seen as inferior, dirty, and undeserving of physical contact. Anand eloquently illustrates how Bakha was taken advantage of by this circumstance. "I was directly struck by this filthy dog! These sons of bitches wander the streets so carelessly! The swine was moving forward without making any attempt to signal his approach. There was not a shred of sympathy

for his regret among the others who crowded around him, staring, making grimaces, and jeering and leering. It was unaffected, ignored his apologies, and took a kind of cruel pleasure in seeing him endure the taunts and profanities of its spokesperson. If the outcasts just accidentally touch the Hindu caste, their apologies is insufficient. They must kneel under their shoes or feet. They are mistreated by the caste without regard for their human sentiments. Bakha was made to feel even more oppressed by the throng and the touching guy who treated him like an inhuman object while he was walking along a public path. The throng yelled at him and mistreated him as the caste guy degraded him as if he were an inhuman item. He suffers and is more oppressed as a result of all these:

Every second felt like an infinite eternity of misery and pain to Bakha. There was a strange stirring in his heart, and his whole demeanor was focused on humility. His leg twitched and jerked under him. He made a sincere effort to show his tormentors how remorseful he was. However, it seemed that his feelings were not being conveyed by the boundaries of distance that the throng had erected between themselves and him. "Careless, irresponsible swine!" they roared, sneered, and ragged as he remained still. "They have no desire to work."

"They just sit around!" They should be eradicated from the planet's surface.

They even turn that abuse into an entertaining display and an opportunity to participate in such a pleasurable activity, which makes them happy, rather than showing him sympathy. The event turns into the Hindu caste system's method of dehumanizing the untouchables. In order to prevent further interaction or physical contact with the higher caste, Bakha must yell in the street about his approach. He screams, "posh keep away, posh sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming, posh, posh, sweeper coming!" (57). However, he had a simmering anger. The memory of whatever mistreatment or censure he had received would ignite a flame in the ashes of guilt within him, causing his sentiments to rise like spurts of smoke from a half-smothered fire, in fitful uncontrolled jerks.

Furthermore, Bakha's deepest feelings as a dignified human being are that the audience doesn't care or understand them. In addition to feeling depressed and angry, he is completely cut off from social connection. Bak.ha believes and understands that all of the mistreatment he endured was unjust as a human being. But since he is aware that he is an untouchable, he just continues to silently protest and follow Hindu caste rules. Outcasts, also known as Dalits, are seen as cursed and treated like dirty dogs; they are not permitted to enter places of worship like temples. They have no right to worship the same deities as Hindus and in the same temple. It is sarcastically demonstrated:

"The temple appeared to move toward him like a monster and engulfed him," and "The temple stood challengingly before him." When Bakha sneaks inside the temple and the audience erupts in a yell of "polluted, polluted, polluted!" the Brahmin below yells, which is very unfair to Bakha. Following his lead, the people above him yelled after him while flailing their hands in a horrible orgy of enthusiasm. Some were afraid, while others were angry. A single note was struck by one of the guys in the audience. "You scavenger, stop walking!" You're off! Our whole service has been polluted by you! The cost of the cleansing ritual must now be paid. You dog, get down and leave.

Through the book, the author reveals the attitudes and practices of the Hindu caste system, which further oppresses the Dalits, outcasts, and untouchables on a daily basis. They are mistreated by the higher caste, who don't care about their human sentiments. Anand expresses his disapproval of the temples as being used as tools of exploitation. He believes that the social prejudice that leads to misery and despair for the outcasts is somehow the fault of the Hindu caste system itself. The upper caste instills terror in the hearts of the outcasts and uses their gods for personal gain. It really demonstrates how outcasts are used in the name of religion, causing hardship and poverty. Because they are the object of sex exploitation, the daughters of untouchables experience hopelessness and exploitation in their day-to-day existence. The so-called guardians of religion often molest untouchable women. The pariah women are seen as objects of sexual desire by the higher classes. In order to create possibilities for exploitation, the priests, acting as intermediaries between the deity and the worshipers, have built a gulf between the two. In the book, Pundit Kali Nath represents the people who take advantage of such ladies. He is a representation of hypocrisy and sexual desire. Bakha's sister, Sohini, is the one who has been sexually abused. The story is told very clearly: Sohini had calmly sat apart from the crowd as it charged the well. She was identified as the sweeper's daughter by the pundit. He had previously seen her when she arrived to clean the restrooms. Under her muslin shirt, the young, fresh woman's large breasts with their black nipple beads showed out so glaringly. Her naive expression of amazement appeared to evoke the lone tender chord in his body.

To attack Sohini, the priest poses as someone who is giving her water. In order to harass him, he requests that Sohini clean the temple: "Sohini was crying. She was unable to talk. He then approached and grabbed me by the breasts as I was stooping to work. Pundit Kali Nath even accuses Sohini of defiling him when she objects to his sexual assault in the temple. The Brahmins' supremacy in the caste system allows the people who congregate to overlook the priest's indecent hostility against the untouchable girl even though they are fully aware of the facts. The victim of humiliation, Sohini, is aware that attempts at sexual assault cannot be met with reprisals. Even Bakha's helpless rage is worthless. As untouchables, they must accept it. As previously established, the Hindu caste system intentionally places the outcasts in a low position so that their lives are dependent on them. The author eloquently illustrates this when Bakha has travel to town to beg for food. He is forced to do this degrading activity since he is compensated with leftover bread rather than cash for performing menial labor for the castes. Bakha is dehumanized in this manner, which depresses him: "Bread for the sweeper, mother," he yelled once again.

No one answered. His legs hurt. His bones had a strange numbness and a lethargic quality. His intellect would not function. He took a seat on the wooden platform of a home in the road after feeling dejected. He felt worn out and disgusted because he had almost forgotten what had made him feel that way—his morning events.

After waiting for the caste Hindus to be kind, he is reprimanded by a lady who feels he has contaminated her house. Furthermore, the mother asks him to do an additional task before giving him the food, ignoring all of his exhaustion: What have you and your sister done to earn your meal today? You have polluted my house, and she didn't clear the lane this morning. You may consume this bread once you come and clear the drain a little. Now that you have desecrated my house, come and do a little work.

The point is not where the abuse ends. She begs Bakha to clean the drain even though she is blind to his really poor health. Following Bakha's completion of his work, the lady cruelly feeds him the bread in an inhumane way: She throws the bread from her above apartment to Bakha as if she were feeding a dog. Exploitation Manifested in Mulk The Untouchables by Raj Anand The author goes on to explain how Bakha's father has been oppressed throughout his life. Bakha's father's account of his awful sickness as a kid has come to represent a kind of acceptance of the dehumanization and untouchability of the outcasts. Bakha is told by his father, "You know, I had a nasty experience too when you were a little child." I visited Hakim Bhagawan D's home in this town when you were sick with a fever. I yelled repeatedly, but nobody paid attention. In addition to being denied access to public services, the castes also devalue the untouchables' humanity. Their work, their services, and their spirits belong to the castes, but their agony, anguish, sadness, grief, and sorrow are exclusively theirs. If the individual who is on the verge of death is a member of the higher caste, things will be quite different.

II. CONCLUSION

But who will listen to a sweeper?" his father continues. I felt like a scorpion was stinging me as I stood like that for an hour in a corner next to the pile of trash I had gathered. It bothered me that even though I was prepared to spend my hard-earned money on medication, I was unable to get it for my kid. My kid is still breathing, Hakimji, and I will be your slave for the rest of my life. My kid is what gives my life purpose. Take pity, Hakimji. God would be good to you. I started crying. "Maharaj, Great One, I forgot," Lakha said. My head with your shoes on it. I have lost my senses. You are my mother and father, Maharaj. I am unable to pay for the medications. All I can do is serve you. The quote illustrates how Bakha's father, who was aware of his status as an untouchable and without the funds to purchase the medication his kid required to live, was forced to beg and give his whole life as a slave to the doctor in order to pay for the medication. The castes now care more about the untouchables' servitudes than their humanity.

Oppression in human existence is shown in the book Untouchable. The relationship between dominance and exploitation—economic, social, and psychological—is referred to as exploitation. People in this book feel taken advantage of as they are shut out of both social and economic life. The restriction of using public spaces like schools, temples, wells, streets, and so on is an example of exploitation. Anand demonstrates how the caste system leads to dehumanization via discrimination and exploitation. The upper castes or Hindus, who exploit them, treat the untouchables, dalits, or outcasts harshly and see them as less than human. The superiors brag about their superiority to the inferiors. The upper classes believe that the outcasts are filthy and cursed, and as such, they should only be placed

in slums and congregant places to reside. They are isolated from all aspects of the economy as they can only work as street sweepers, drain cleaners, and toilet cleaners. They are compensated with bread scraps rather than cash. Even if they work hard and are intelligent, having good employment is insufficient. They struggle and feel hopeless for the rest of their lives due to this illness, which causes terrible anguish. In conclusion, Mulk Raj Anand's work *Untouchable* portrays the human exploitation that is often endured by members of the lower classes, especially the Untouchables, who are considered outcasts in Indian culture.

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